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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5306

INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 6598

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1242

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 5129

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 9273

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1816

RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 5946

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 003559

SIPDIS

NSC FOR DENNIS WILDER AND LIZ PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KJUS](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [FAIR](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: BANGKOK AMBASSADORS URGE RTG TO INCREASE AIRPORT SECURITY

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Classified By: Ambassador Eric G. John, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador and counterparts December 4 inquired about RTG plans to protect Thailand's airports and other key infrastructure in a meeting with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Virasakdi Futrakul and Police Lieutenant General Prayoon Amarit, Commissioner Attached to the Commissioner of the Royal Thai Police. The recent seizure of Bangkok's international airports had raised serious concerns in the international community over the state of security at Thailand's airports. Virasakdi and Prayoon assured the Ambassadors that increased security plans had been put in place. The plans included three layers of security cordons that would be put in place if intelligence pointed that an attempt to seize Suvarnabhumi airport had been planned and the stationing of 1,000 additional police near the airport. The Police had already put in place increased checkpoints on the access roads to Suvarnabhumi. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador December 4 joined counterpart Ambassadors from the Australia, Canada, the European Union and its member states, and Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea to raise infrastructure security with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Virasakdi Futrakul and representatives of the Royal Thai Police (RTP). The Ambassadors began the meeting by presenting to Virasakdi the statement in paragraph 5. The Ambassadors expressed serious concern over the security of Thailand's airports and stressed to Virasakdi that it was imperative that the RTG improve the protection of the airports. The Ambassador also pointed to the Thai government's commitments under the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (also known as the Montreal Civil Aviation Convention) and related Protocol. Thailand had acceded to the Convention on May 16, 1976, and the RTG was therefore bound to protect to take measures to protect airports and to prosecute individuals who disrupted airport services.

¶3. (C) Virasakdi told the Ambassadors that Acting Prime Minister Chavarat Charnvirakul was unable to meet with the

Ambassadors due to an audience at the Palace as part of the ongoing birthday celebrations for the King. The RTG deeply regretted the inconvenience to international travelers, Virasakdi. The Police had been unable to restrain People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) protesters from seizing the airports due to worries that substantial casualties would result if force had been used. The Thai government intended to live up to its commitments under the Montreal Civil Aviation Convention, and the Thai airport authority had already filed both civil and criminal charges against the perpetrators of the airport seizures.

¶4. (C) Police Lt. Gen. Prayoon explained that the RTP, in conjunction with the airport authority, had already revised security plans for Suvarnabhumi. The RTP would increase intelligence surveillance in order to increase lead time to a possible future attempt to seize the airport. Additional checkpoints had been set up on the access roads to the airport and 1,000 additional police had been stationed twenty-four hours a day at police facilities around Suvarnabhumi. Prayoon raised a court injunction that had put in place after the October 7, 2008, clash between the RTP and the PAD. The injunction had restricted Police response by instructing the police to resist with only the lightest measures when making a first attempt to control protesters. The Court had warned the Police to only gradually begin to use force when engaging protesters if peaceful means failed. The injunction had restricted RTP actions when the PAD November 25 had moved to Suvarnabhumi to seize the airport. Changed public opinion regarding the PAD and lessons learned by the RTP over the past week would not allow a repeat of the airport seizure, Prayoon said.

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¶5. (U) Begin text of statement:

Statement by the Ambassadors of Australia, Canada, EU, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and the United of States America.

The Ambassadors in Bangkok of Australia, Canada, EU and its member states, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, the United of States America welcome the end of the seizure of Donmuang and Suvarnabhumi International Airports.

While respecting the right to protest and without interfering in Thailand's internal politics, we reiterate that it was most regrettable and highly inappropriate that the airport was seized by demonstrators on November 25th and remained seized for a week, resulting in the complete shutdown of airport operations and causing much inconvenience to so many travelers, foreign as well as domestic.

We, the representatives of interested countries, are still seriously concerned such a major regional hub of the Asia Pacific region as the Suvarnabhumi International Airport could stay vulnerable to outside assaults of any kind.

In order to restore confidence and the international image of Thailand as a major tourist destination, we, the representatives of interested countries, therefore:

- urge the government of Thailand to take all necessary measures to improve the protection and security of all Thai airports, so as to avoid the recurrence of a similar seizure in the future;

- call on all sides concerned not to threaten the operations of Suvarnabhumi and Donmuang airports and to commit themselves not to disrupt air traffic either in Bangkok or at regional airports. End text of statement.

JOHN